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ILLINOIS STATE PARK

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CONSERVATION

WELCOME TO GIANT CITY STATE PARK!

Giant City State Park features 3,694 acres of spectacular beauty. Woods, sandstone formations and an abundance of fascinating plants and wildlife make Giant City an experience few visitors forget. Nestled in the Shawnee Hills, Giant City is a mere 12 miles south of Carbondale, Illinois off of U.S. 51. The name "Giant City," derived from a group of huge sandstone blocks in the park, perfectly characterizes the auspicious features of the area.

PARK OBJECTIVES

Satisfying our recreational needs while protecting and utilizing the natural and cultural features of the land is the main objective at Giant City. By providing a large recreational facility the park meets this objective daily. But, we need your help! This is your park so please protect the impressive scenery through consideration of the natural and cultural features. Improper disposal of trash, picking flowers and other plants, and hunting out of the time zone season are all actions that ruin state parks. Courteous behavior saves the beauty for everyone.

HISTORY

Natural History. Giant City State Park, located in the Shawnee National Forest, is part of a belt of hills that cross the narrow portion of southern Illinois. Once a low land plain, this area slowly emerged from the sea which formed the northern edge of the present Gulf of Mexico.

With this region slowly rising and streams cutting deep valleys, striking sandstone formations were developed. Faulting and folding also occurred forming structures wholly unique to the park.

While visiting the park you should note the color markings along the huge rock walls. Some of the deep shades of red, brown, and yellow are caused by weathering. These colorful areas were stained by minerals carried by water seepage. Unweathered stone is characterized by a white or lightly buffed color.

Yellow is the distinctive color of sandstone. The black or coal color is caused by coal beds, known as "Coal Measures" which are typical of Central and Appalachian states.

Cultural Development. It is estimated that there was Indian habitation in this area as early as 400 B.C. Shelter bluffs, otherwise known as rock shelters, in the park have revealed artifacts of early Indian life. The ceilings of the two shelters in the park are blackened by smoke from ancient fires.

Other evidence of early Indian Habitation is the "Stonefort" located on an 80 foot sandstone cliff near the main entrance of the park. Investigations have concluded that the wall dates between 600-800 A.D., a part of the Late Woodland Period.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the first white settlers arrived from Kentucky and Tennessee. By 1850, settlers, primarily farmers, found the land conducive to a good fruit tree crop. However, much of the vegetation was left untouched. During the Civil War many of the cliffs and canyons became havens for soldiers of both Union and Confederate Armies.

By the 1900's many biologists, geologists, and visitors had become interested in the area as both a study region and a place for relaxation. Finally in 1927 the State of Illinois acquired 1,162 acres of land and Giant City State Park became a reality. With the building of the Lodge in 1938 and additional land acquisition, Giant City has become increasingly popular for leisure activities.

UNIQUE FEATURES

Fern Rock Nature Preserve. French's Shooting Stars and Large Flowering Mints are the type of spectacular rare plants you can see in Fern Rocks Nature Preserve. The 110 acre preserve, located just south of the main entrance, is open for your enjoyment. Hiking is restricted to the trails only. If your group is larger than 25 people please obtain permission from the Site Superintendent before hiking into the preserve.

Water Tower. In 1970 an 82 foot, 100,000 gallon water tower with a 50 foot observation deck was built in the park. Winner of the "Steel Tank of the Year" award in 1972 this water tower has been described as "a daring artistic design." To gain a picturesque view of Giant City State Park, climb the spiral staircase leading to the circular observation deck.

Natural Beauties. In the cool days of spring, Giant City's forests are blooming with Red Bud, Shadbush, Wakoo, Hercules' Club and Flowering Dogwood. More than 75 types of trees accent the park making it a colorful wonder.

Red, blue, pink, green and white are just a few colors you'll see on the ground during blooming season. Trillium, Bloodroot, Spring Beauty, Sweet William, Dutchman's-breeches, Lady-slipper, Jack-in-the-pulpit, and Shooting Star are among the over 800 ferns and flowers in the park. To experience the peak season when nearly 170 flowers are in bloom, visit the park in May.

Wildlife. The mockingbird, the raccoon and the whitetail-deer frequent Giant City. When you stroll down the trails listen closely for the call of the whipperwill and his southern cousin chuck-will's-widow. Remember this park is their home too.

PICNICKING

Several shelters are provided for group picnicking throughout the park. Also, individual picnic facilities are scattered in the picnic areas. Pure water, picnic tables, and fireplaces are provided for your use.

Please limit cooking to park grill or camp stove. Playground facilities are located near most picnic areas.

TRAILS

Picturesque hiking is available along the Post Oak, Devils Standtable, Giant City, Stonefort and Indian Creek Shelter trails. The Post Oak Nature Trail has been specially designed for blind visitors to enjoy. Wood chipped trails, bridges, and handrails have been provided so that everyone can view the scenic bluff top forest community.

Giant City State Park also features extensive equestrian trails throughout the park. Bring out your own horse or utilize the riding stable and horse rental available at the park. Guided horseback riding is available with groups leaving daily for trail rides. Minors must be accompanied by an adult. Please ride your horse on designated trails only.

FISHING AND HUNTING

Boat fishing and launching ramps are situated along the Little Grassy Lake on the east side of the park. Boating is limited to ten horsepower motors. The lake, owned by the Crab Orchard Wildlife Refuge, features largemouth bass, bluegill, and crappie for your fishing enjoyment. Canoeing is also quite popular at this area.

Hunting at Giant City is controlled on a "Time and Geographic Zone" basis for optimal population control. If you're planning on hunting please contact the Site Superintendent for details on season time and area rules.

Hunting is allowed for upland game such as dove, quail, rabbit, and white tail deer. Proper registration rules are enforced.

FACILITIES

Camping. You will notice on the map that a Class "A" camping area is available for visitors. This area includes electricity, a sanitary station, and a modern utility building with showers and flush toilets. This area is available for both tent and trailer camping. If you are an equestrian, a Class "A" campground is provided off the horse trail on the south west corner of the park. This area has been developed to include the necessary facilities for you and your horse.

A class "C" or vehicular access camping area is available for youth group camping. Groups of minors must have adequate supervision and at least one adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.

If you prefer, a primitive camping experience is available. The facility, located at the south end of the family campground, contains a central parking lot with 14 walk in campsites.

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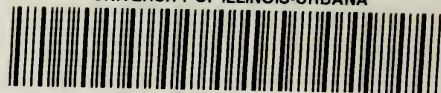
When camping isn't your preference, but you enjoy the out-of-doors, the Giant City Lodge may be for you. Built of multi-hued stone native to the area and accented with beautiful white oak pillars the lodge and twelve cabins offer a clean reasonable resting alternative. A spacious lounge colorfully decorated in Indian motif, the large dining room, banquet halls, and the snack bar truly represent Southern Illinois hospitality at its finest. The lodge and cabins feature a rustic exterior accented by modern interiors including air conditioning and television. The dining facilities are also available for parties, receptions, business meetings, and banquets. Lodge and cabins are open March through mid-November.

The lodge is the largest facility at the park and was completed in 1939 as a part of the original Civilian Conservation Corp project. The lodge is handicapped accessible.

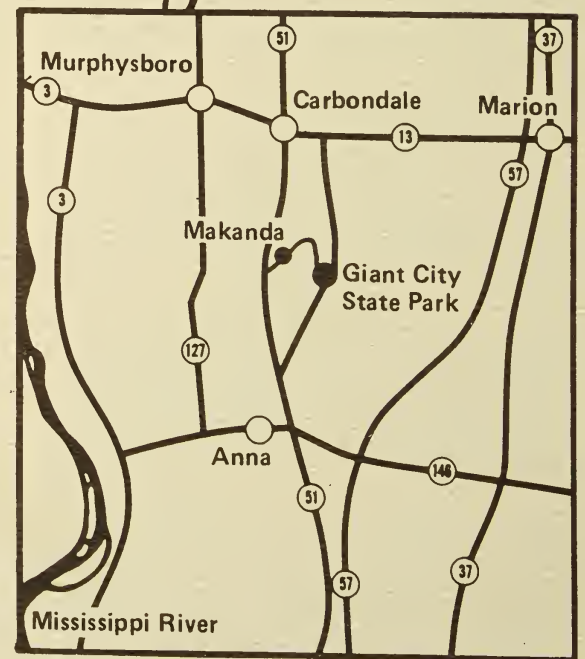
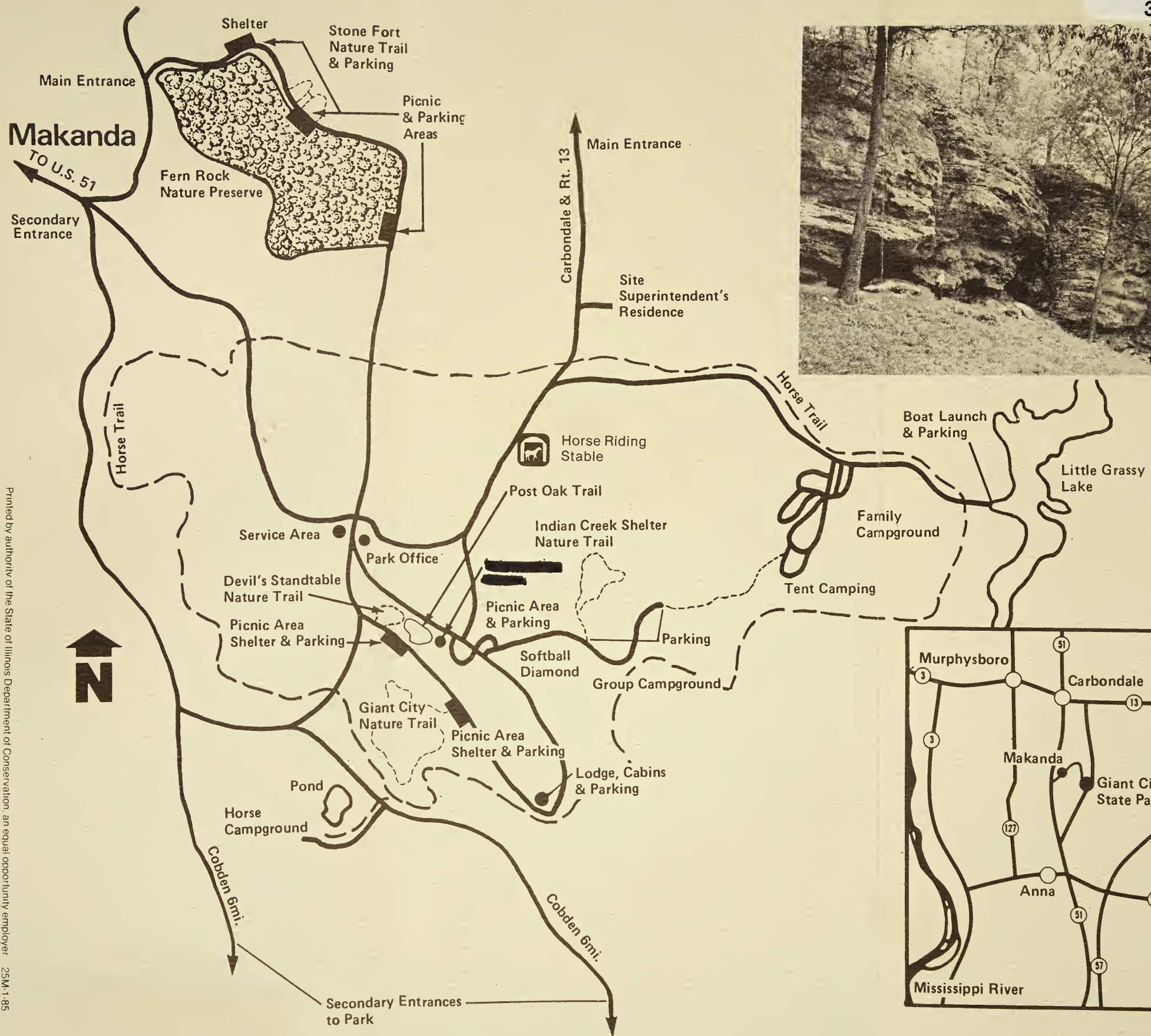
For more information contact Giant City State Park, attention Site Superintendent, R.R. #1, Makanda, Illinois 62958, or phone (618) 457-4836.

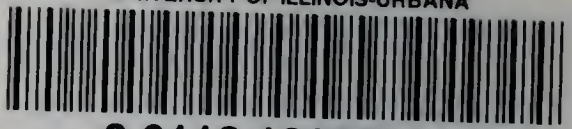


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